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Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives
Second session
3-14 April 2000
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives

Review reports and proposals for further action and initiatives submitted by organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other concerned organizations

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Contribution from the United Nations Development Programme**

1. The Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, in paragraph 24 of the annex to decision 1,[1] requested the Secretary-General to provide written information on how coordination efforts in the field of development cooperation can be more effectively utilized in implementing the commitments of the World Summit for Social Development, and to present it to the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session.

2. The Secretary-General accordingly circulates herewith, for the information of the Preparatory Committee, the report prepared by the United Nations Development Programme in response to that request.

* A/AC.253/12.
** The report is being issued herewith as received in the language of submission only.

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Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 45* and corrigendum (A/54/45 and Corr.1), chap. VI, sect. B.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

BUREAU FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Commitment 10
International Cooperation for Social Development

New York, January 2000

Commitment 10
International Cooperation for Social Development

Introduction

Commitment 10 of the WSSD *Declaration* requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide information on how coordination efforts in the field of development cooperation can be more effectively utilized in implementing the commitments of the WSSD.

This note responds to this requests. It starts from three premises:

1. The WSSD highlighted three dimensions of social development, poverty reduction, employment and social integration. Special emphasis has been accorded to the elimination of the worst forms of poverty, and in this context, to ensuring basic education and health services for all.
2. What holds back progress in poverty reduction is not so much lack of technical know-how but often lack of political will. Poverty reduction is seen as 'welfare' or 'consumption' rather than an investment and a fair win-win strategy for all.
3. International cooperation, including donor coordination, is effective in particular where countries themselves pursue clearly defined and consensus-based strategies.

The key to enhancing the contribution of international development cooperation to social development is thus to facilitate at all levels of development and among all actor groups, an enhanced understanding of, and agreement about, the fact that poverty – besides being an ethical concern – also constitutes a gross economic inefficiency. In addition, it will be necessary to disaggregate the complex phenomenon of poverty into concrete, actionable components and to launch campaigns to tackle each of th se components in a decisive manner, step by step – promoting policy consensus and ownership on each one of them, and strengthening national policy coherence by enhanced coordination of international development cooperation.

In more detail, such a campaign could be conceived as follows.

Proposal for a Global Campaign to End Poverty

The 10-step agenda outlined below constitutes a first phase, step I, of the suggested Global Campaign to End Poverty (GCEP). In order to benefit from synergy between the various aspects of poverty reduction, this first step of GCEP will have to be systematically combined with further steps, focusing for example, on enhanced access for

all to financial services and employment creation. But to begin with, the agenda of GCEP could entail in particular, initiatives such as the following:

1. A decision by 'Copenhagen +5' in June 2000 to launch GCEP, and as its first step, a global programme to ensure basic education for all and basic health care for all, including reproductive services.
2. As part of GCEP, all countries would commit themselves to convening national social summits (NSSs). These NSSs would be based on prior sub-national events and bring together all major actor groups. Countries would create for the duration of the Campaign posts of high-level GCEP Emissaries, including representatives of youth.
3. Social Development Assistance Committees (SDACs) would be formed on a regional, or as appropriate, sub-regional level, linked wherever possible to existing organizational entities. The role of the SDACs would be to facilitate peer review of national poverty reduction strategies, and in particular, of their suggested aid components. Available aid funds would be allocated to the SDACs and approved for disbursements by the peer groups, in consultation with donor representatives.
4. National aid partnership fora would help ensure transparent use of the allocated funds which would be granted as budgetary support to the national authorities (state and/or non-state) responsible for ensuring implementation of the agreed strategy. Donors would agree to monitoring and reporting on progress according to a common set of criteria and procedures.
5. Countries would commit themselves to ensuring full funding of the objective of basic education and health care for all. Donors would, in turn, commit themselves to making 20% of aid resources available for step I of GCEP. This amount would be phased out according to an explicit, country-specific formula so as to create space and resources for the next steps of GCEP and to ensure the incorporation of the necessary expenditure items into national budgets by the end of step I.
6. The step I initiatives of the GCEP would form an integral part of existing aid coordination frameworks, such as UNDAF and the CDF, so as to facilitate their linkage with other supportive programmes and a coordinated phase in of subsequent GCEP steps.
7. An international high-level GCEP Council would be established and meet annually prior to the UN General Assembly. It would have a tripartite – government, civil society and business – composition. The chairs of the (sub-)regional SDACs would submit progress reports to this Council.
8. Universities and policy think tanks would be invited to create a volunteer corps of advisors to assist countries with expertise that they might require.
9. Development research and policy networks, such as the Global Development Network (GDN) would be invited to help create knowledge banks and web sites to facilitate access to relevant experiences and knowledge. Similarly, UNDP's Netaid and other web sites of UN system agencies, notably those of UNICEF, UNESCO, and WHO could be linked to an emerging world-wide knowledge bank on poverty reduction. National and local branches of such a knowledge bank could form part of the poverty reduction strategies of individual countries so as to ensure that indigenous knowledge is brought to full bear.

10.As part of the GCEP media services world-wide could be invited to make voluntary contributions to the campaign, helping in particular, in getting the message across that poverty is a luxury that the world, and especially poor countries, can ill afford.

Next Steps

The first next step would be for 'Copenhagen +5' to reach agreement on launching such a campaign. A second step might be to establish a small campaign secretariat that could facilitate the coming together of the various actors and their contributions.

Many building blocks of the Campaign are already in place. The challenge now is to pull them together and to ensure their aggregate, coordinated impact – which promises to be much larger than the separate effects that any of the constituent components is likely ever to have. In order to rid the world of the ugly scar of poverty the international community has to move *in step*. Step I of the GCEP suggested here could be a first step of that moving in step.